

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Memphis/Shelby County Division of Planning and Development (DPD) is the technical planning staff for the Memphis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). DPD is responsible for executing transportation planning activities in compliance with Federal regulations. The 2003 -2026 *Long-Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP) is based on the 2000-2023 LRTP, which was adopted in December 2000 by the MPO and prepared under the guidelines of the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21). The 2023 LRTP was further amended and re-adopted in December 2002. The 2003-2026 LRTP reaffirms the basic issues and goals of the previous plans while considering additional matters of concern.

The Memphis MPO includes Shelby County, Tennessee, and her seven municipalities as follows: Memphis, Arlington, Bartlett, Collierville, Germantown, Lakeland, and Millington. The MPO also comprises northern DeSoto County, Mississippi, including the municipalities of Hernando, Horn Lake, Olive Branch, and Southaven. Western Fayette County, Tennessee, is also in the MPO, including the municipalities of Gallaway and Piperton. See **Figure 1, Memphis MPO Region Map**.

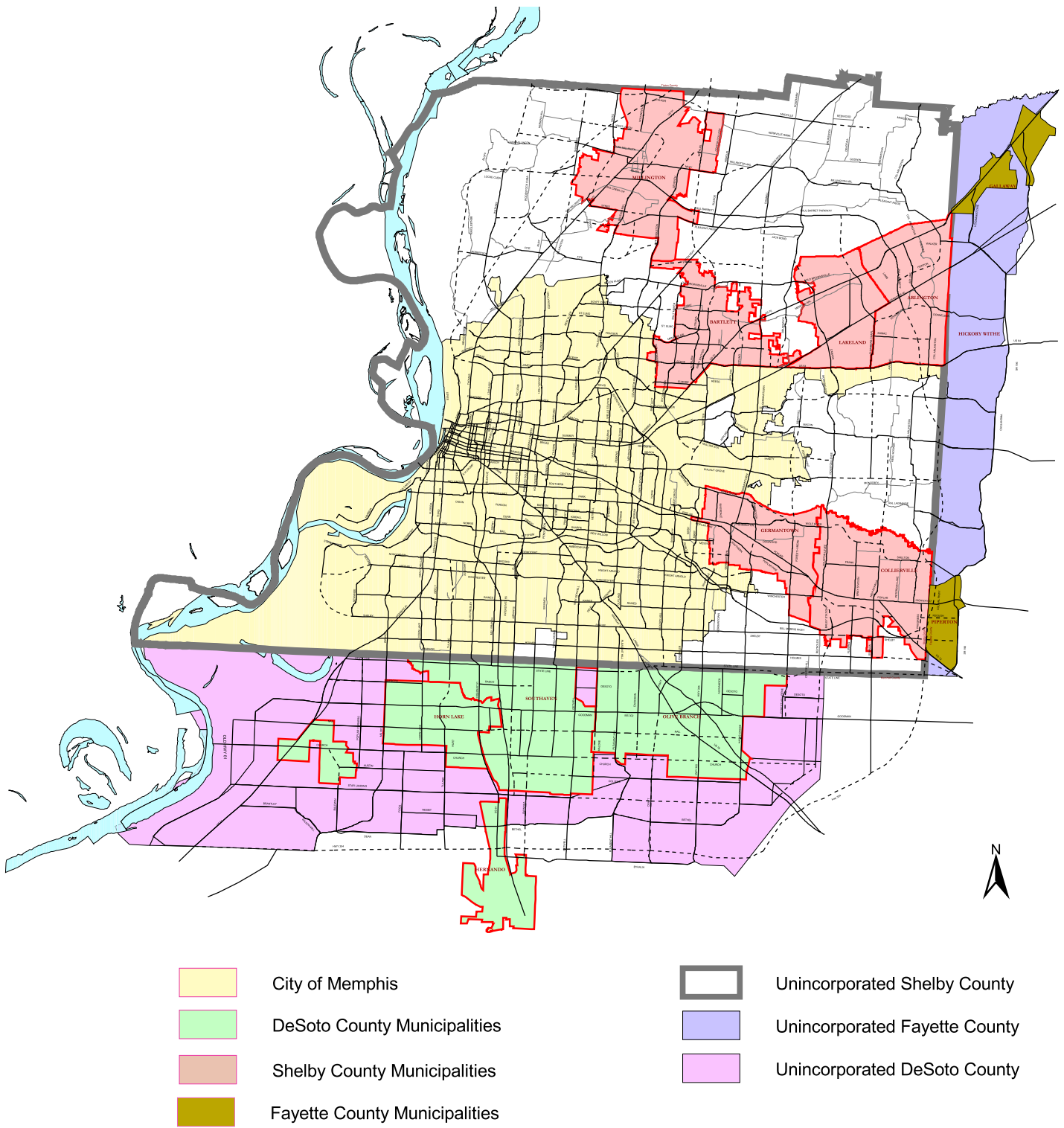
This plan incorporates a multi-modal approach to transportation planning in the Memphis area for a 22-year horizon and presents recommendations for improvements for the Memphis International Airport, the Port of Memphis, regional interstates and other highways, the local mass transit system, and local bikeways and pedestrian ways.

This plan follows the guidelines of the TEA-21, the successor of the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991* (ISTEA), the *Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990* (CAAA), *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* (Title VI), and the *President's Executive Order on Environmental Justice* (EJ).

Included in this LRTP is a financial plan for implementing recommended projects. The financial plan was developed by the Memphis MPO in collaboration with local jurisdictions, the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA), the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT). This financial plan verifies that the costs of the proposed transportation improvements and dollars required to maintain current and future systems are consistent with programmed and projected sources of revenue. The plan is fiscally constrained.

To implement the LRTP, the MPO's *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* contains three years of programmed transit and non-transit projects (projects for which specific funding and dates for implementation have been set). The TIP is the primary programming mechanism for implementing the LRTP and therefore must be consistent with it. The Memphis MPO updates the LRTP every three years and TIP every two years.

Figure 1
Memphis MPO Region Map



A. History of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)

The *1962 Federal Aid Highway Act* first recognized the need for a specialized transportation planning process in the nation's urban centers. The Act sets conditions for spending Federal highway and transit funds in urbanized areas (defined as areas with a population exceeding 50,000 persons, as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau). MPOs have the responsibility for planning and coordinating the spending of Federal surface transportation dollars. From this Act and the subsequent amendments, the "3C" process was developed.

The "3C" process:

- ***Comprehensively*** consider social, economic, land use and environmental effects on all modes of transportation;
- Assure ***coordination*** among the States and all affected local governments, and provide for participation in the planning process by citizens and all other entities affecting and affected by transportation improvements, and;
- ***Continually*** update the resulting regional transportation plans considering growth of the metropolitan area and corridors, changes in land use, impacts of transportation projects on air quality, and other factors that affect transportation needs and performance of transportation facilities. The continuing program also includes working with transportation implementation agencies to facilitate project development.

Transportation planning in metropolitan areas is intended to be a collaborative process led by the MPO, but inclusive of other key stakeholders in the regional transportation system. A key component in the transportation planning process is involvement from the public, the business community, community groups, and environmental organizations.

B. Key Legislation that Shapes Transportation Planning

Below is a brief description of Federal legislation that influences and guides transportation planning.

1. Clean Air Amendment Acts of 1990 (CAAA)

The CAAA of 1990 requires that all areas of the country meet Federal standards for air quality. In 1997, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed new National Air Quality Standards for the regulation of what was considered a dangerous amount of ground level ozone and fine particulate matter. The proposal changed the ozone standard from 120-parts-per-billion measured over one hour to 80-parts-per-billion measured over an eight-hour period. The change was proposed to better reflect the health risks of air pollution. The implementation of the proposed eight-hour standard is scheduled to begin in 2007 or 2008. Until then, the one-hour standard remains in effect. The standard for carbon monoxide, the other principal transportation-related pollutant, has remained the same.

Once a region is designated as a non-attainment area, it is expected to make reasonable progress in controlling air pollution emissions within its boundaries until air quality standards are met. Because motor vehicles are the largest contributors to carbon monoxide and ground level ozone pollution in the United States, MPOs have been directed by the CAAA to focus on air quality as well as transportation mobility. The CAAA specifies that transportation plans, programs, and projects must not (1) worsen existing air quality, (2) create any additional violations, or (3) delay the attainment of standards. It is the responsibility of each MPO to verify that all transportation plans and programs are in conformity with State-approved emission budgets. Air quality conformity analysis for the LRTP is discussed in **Chapter 8**, “Air Quality Conformity Determination”.

2. Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21)

The authorization of TEA-21 in 1998 strengthened the Federal government’s commitment to transportation by significantly increasing funding from former ISTEA levels. The objective of TEA-21, as it relates to MPOs, is to:

"Encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight and foster economic growth and development within and through urbanized areas, while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution."

Over the six years of its authorization, TEA-21 has provided more than \$165 billion nationwide for core highway programs and more than \$36 billion for public transit systems. Because TEA-21 is due to expire at the end of fiscal year 2003, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is currently in the process of drafting its successor.

The seven TEA-21 planning factors that guide transportation planning are listed in Chapter III.

3. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (TITLE VI)

Title VI states that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal assistance” (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1). As the recipient of Federal transportation funds, the MPO is required under law to ensure non-discrimination in all phases of any planning process for inter-modal surface facilities the organization participates in.

On an annual basis each MPO in Tennessee prepares its *Title VI Report* highlighting its efforts to ensure Title VI compliance (see **Appendix A, The FY2003 Title VI 2003 Report**). Also, in Chapter IV, goals and objectives related to Title VI are discussed.

4. President's Executive Order on Environmental Justice (EJ)

The *President's Executive Order on Environmental Justice* enhances Title VI regulations by mandating that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low income populations." The MPO, through this plan, recognizes the importance of environmental justice to transportation planning. As such, environmental justice issues are incorporated into the plan's goals, objectives and strategies.

C. Three Key Documents of the MPO

All MPOs are required by legislation to develop and maintain three key products: a long range transportation plan, a transportation improvement program and a unified planning work program as identified below:

1. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The LRTP presents the vision of the regional transportation system for twenty years and is updated every three years. Its purpose is to guide the decision making process for the selection and implementation of transportation projects. Long Range Transportation Plans vary widely in style and content from one region to another, but the TEA-21 Federal regulation found in 23 *CFR* 450.322, Subpart C, states that "*the Metropolitan Planning Process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing at least a twenty year horizon.*"

The LRTP includes long-range and short-range actions that lead to the development of an integrated, intermodal transportation system that facilitates the effective and efficient movement of people and goods. The transportation plan shall be reviewed and updated at least triennially in non-attainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years in attainment areas to confirm its validity and its consistency with current and forecasted transportation and land use conditions as well as trends extending into the forecast period.

The transportation plan must be approved by the MPO. In addition, the plan must:

- Identify the projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the plan;
- Identify adopted congestion management strategies;
- Identify pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities;
- Reflect the consideration given to the results of the management systems;
- Assess capital investment and other measures necessary to preserve the existing transportation system and make most efficient use of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and enhance mobility of people and goods;

- Reflect a multi-modal evaluation of the transportation, socioeconomic, environmental, and financial impact of the overall plan, including all major transportation investments;
- Indicate that the design concept and scope have not been fully determined and will require further analysis for major transportation investments for which analyses are not completed;
- Reflect consideration of the area's comprehensive long-range land use plan and metropolitan development objectives including local housing goals and strategies; community development and employment plans and strategies; environmental resource plans; local, State, and national goals and objectives such as linking low-income housing with employment opportunities and the area's overall social, economic, environmental and energy conservation goals and objectives;
- Indicate, as appropriate, proposed transportation enhancement activities; and
- Include a financial plan that demonstrates the consistency of the proposed transportation plan with available projected sources of revenue. (The financial plan shall compare the estimated revenue from existing and proposed funding sources that can reasonably be expected to be available for transportation uses and the estimated cost of constructing, maintaining and operating the total transportation system over the period of the plan).

2. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The TIP is a financially constrained, three-year program addressing the most immediate implementation priorities for transportation projects and strategies of the LRTP. It allocates limited transportation resources based on a clear set of short-term transportation priorities. Under Federal law, the TIP:

- Covers a minimum three-year period of investment
- Is updated at least every two years
- Is realistic in terms of available funding (known as a fiscally constrained TIP) and is not just a "wish list" of projects
- Conforms to the *State Implementation Plan for Air Quality* if the region is designated a nonattainment or maintenance area
- Is approved by the MPO and the Governor for air quality
- Is incorporated into the statewide transportation improvement program.

3. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP identifies the specific planning priorities and work tasks that an MPO will address during the annual program period. The development of the UPWP is required as part of the "3Cs" metropolitan planning process and specifically the *Metropolitan Planning Rules (23CFR 450.314)*.

D. Tennessee & Mississippi MPOs

There are nearly 400 MPOs active in the United States, including eleven (11) in Tennessee (Bristol, Chattanooga, Clarksville, Cleveland, Jackson, Johnson City, Kingsport, Knoxville, Lakeway, Memphis and Nashville) and three (3) in Mississippi (Biloxi-Gulfport/Pascagoula, Hattiesburg and Jackson). Though the structure of each MPO varies slightly, Tennessee MPOs are most commonly made up of a policy committee, technical advisory committees, citizen advisory committee and the staff of the local area planning organization. These MPOs also continuously cooperate with various other non-profit, community, business and environmental organizations.

E. Memphis MPO

The Memphis MPO serves as the primary forum for collective and cooperative decision-making regarding transportation policies by elected officials of local governments. Tennessee Governor Ray Blanton in 1977 and Mississippi Governor Cliff Finch in 1978 designated the Memphis MPO as the lead agency for transportation planning in the Memphis urbanized area. Subsequent agreements between TDOT, MDOT, and the Memphis MPO developed the organizational structure and membership. The urbanized area had become eligible for MPO designation after it was determined from the 1980 census that the area met the required minimum population of 50,000 people in a central city.

The Memphis MPO is composed of two boards, the Executive Board and the Regional Advisory Board (RAB), and five committees: Air Quality, Citizens Advisory, Engineering and Technical, Freight, and Transportation Safety committees.

1. Executive Board

The Executive Board is responsible for policy direction and has the final responsibility for transportation planning and programming. The board is comprised of six members: the Governors of Tennessee and Mississippi; the Chairman of the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors; the Mayors of Memphis and Shelby County; and a designated elected official who represents affected municipalities and smaller communities in the Memphis MPO area.

2. Regional Advisory Board (RAB)

The RAB is responsible for reviewing all transportation planning, programming and implementation activities among the various jurisdictions and agencies comprising the MPO region. The RAB makes recommendations to the Executive Board based on a majority vote.

The RAB has 20 voting members consisting of the elected executive official of each county and municipality in the planning area as well as the chairs of the Memphis Area

Transit Authority (MATA), the Memphis and Shelby County Port Commission and the Memphis and Shelby County Airport Authority. The RAB also includes ex-officio or non-voting member representatives from the Memphis City Council and the Shelby County Board of Commissioners, representatives from each modal administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation, and a representative from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

3. Air Quality Committee

The Air Quality Committee advises and assists the Executive Board, the RAB, and other committees on changes in local, State or Federal air quality standards and their impact on transportation matters. It makes recommendations to the MPO on undertaking measures designed for the reduction of mobile source emissions. Additionally, it reviews all proposals for expenditures of Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds or funds with the primary purpose of reducing mobile source emissions.

The committee makes a positive or negative recommendation to the RAB concerning the planned use of funds on air quality projects. Membership includes representatives from the local air pollution control program, MATA and members of the Engineering and Technical Committee whose responsibilities include air quality and are in a jurisdiction within a designated particulate, carbon monoxide, ozone or nitrogen dioxide maintenance or nonattainment air quality area as determined by the Environmental Protection Agency.

4. Citizen Advisory Committee

The Citizen Advisory Committee reports to the Executive Board on matters of planning or administration within the metropolitan planning area. Each governmental entity represented on the Executive Board and the RAB appoints a member to this committee and each jurisdiction has at least one representative. Municipalities or counties with populations greater than 50,000 may appoint one additional member when the population exceeds the next 50,000 population-threshold as determined by the U. S. Census Bureau.

5. Engineering and Technical Committee

This committee advises and assists the Executive Board and RAB on matters of planning and engineering. Membership of the committee consists of representatives from the City of Memphis Engineer's Office; the Shelby County Engineer's Office; and an engineer, planner, or other designated person from each governmental entity in the Memphis MPO who is responsible for planning or implementing transportation projects within each jurisdiction.

In addition, representatives of other agencies including Federal, State and local agencies that may impact the planning or implementation process of the MPO may also be a member of this committee. The chairman of the Engineering and Technical Committee is the Memphis MPO Planning Coordinator.

6. Freight Committee

The Freight Committee advises and assists the Executive Board and the RAB and makes recommendations to all other committees of the MPO on strategies that aid the movement of freight into, around, and out of the urbanized area. Membership is composed of representatives of the various providers and users of modes of transportation specifically used in transporting goods.

7. Transportation Safety Committee

The Transportation Safety Committee advises and assists the Executive Board and the RAB and all committees of the MPO on strategies in planning and implementation of transportation projects as they relate to transportation safety. The committee promotes coordination of traffic safety programs and initiatives among member jurisdictions. Membership of this committee includes members of law enforcement, public safety, engineering departments from the local participating jurisdictions and public or private interest groups that focus on transportation related safety issues.